A Study of Mobile Human Relationships in the Selected Novels of Twenty First Century

Synopsis Submitted to

Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University Nanded for Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

In the Subject of English

Research Student

Biradar Mayuri Madhavrao

Under the Guidance of

Dr. Prashant Raosaheb Shinde
Head & Associate Professor,
Department of English
Shivneri Mahavidyalaya, Shirur Anantpal Tal.
Shirur. Dist. Latur

December 2024

I. Introduction

In the twenty-first century, human relationships have undergone significant transformations due to a confluence of globalization, technological advancements, migration, urbanization, and socio-cultural changes. The rapid integration of cultures, facilitated by technology and the movement of people across geographical boundaries, has altered traditional dynamics of interpersonal relationships. Family structures have become more fluid, moving away from the rigid definitions of nuclear or joint families to accommodate more diverse, adaptive forms. Friendships and intimate partnerships have also evolved to reflect the complexities of a world where physical and emotional mobility are constant. These changes have brought new challenges, such as a sense of alienation, identity crises, generational gaps, and struggles to balance personal desires with societal expectations.

Globalization has fostered a sense of interconnectedness but has simultaneously disrupted the stability of traditional relationships. As individuals increasingly migrate for education, career opportunities, or personal growth, they often face the dual challenge of maintaining ties to their roots while adapting to new cultures and norms. This mobility, both physical and emotional, frequently leads to fragmented relationships and the need to negotiate identity and belonging in different contexts. The proliferation of digital communication tools, such as social media, instant messaging, and virtual platforms, has further redefined the nature of human connection, enabling long-distance relationships while sometimes diminishing the depth of face-to-face interactions.

Contemporary literature serves as a mirror to these shifting dynamics, capturing the fluid, adaptive, and often transient nature of twenty-first-century relationships. Through narratives that span multiple geographies, generations, and socio-economic backgrounds, modern novels offer profound insights into how individuals navigate these changes. The chosen novels for this study are exemplary works that delve into these evolving relationship paradigms. Each novel presents unique perspectives on how individuals respond to the pressures of modernity, mobility, and cultural shifts.

- Deshpande, Shashi. *In the Country of Deceit*. India: Penguin Books, 2008.
- Kapur, Ratika. *The Private Life of Mrs. Sharma*. New Delhi: Bloomsbury, 2015.
- Lahiri, Jhumpa. *The Namesake.* India: Harper Collins, 2003.
- Menon, Anil. *The Beast with Nine Billion Feet*. New Delhi: Zuban, 2009.
- Rushdie, Salman. *Fury.* New Delhi: Penguin Random House, 2001.

- Sharma, Akhil. *Family Life*. India: Penguin Books Limited, 2014.

In the Country of Deceit by Shashi Deshpande is a nuanced exploration of female desire, societal norms, and personal freedom. The novel follows Devyani, an independent woman who leads a quiet life in a small town until she embarks on an affair with a married police officer. This forbidden relationship challenges her beliefs, forcing her to confront the complexities of love, morality, and social judgment. Deshpande's writing sensitively captures the internal struggles of a woman seeking fulfillment in a society that imposes rigid expectations. The novel offers a poignant reflection on the consequences of deception, both self-inflicted and societal.

Ratika Kapur's *The Private Life of Mrs. Sharma* tells the story of a seemingly conventional middle-class woman in Delhi who leads a double life. Mrs. Sharma's outward persona as a dutiful wife and mother is contrasted by her secretive and emotionally charged relationship with a younger man. As she navigates the demands of work, family, and personal desires, the novel reveals the hidden tensions and suppressed needs within her. Kapur examines themes of female agency, urban alienation, and the silent rebellion against societal constraints. The novel offers a compelling portrayal of how modernity disrupts traditional roles and expectations.

Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* is a poignant exploration of identity, belonging, and generational conflict within the Indian-American immigrant experience. The novel follows Gogol Ganguli, who struggles with his unusual name and the cultural duality of his heritage. As he grows up in the United States, Gogol grapples with his parents' expectations, his desire for autonomy, and the pull of his Bengali roots. Lahiri masterfully depicts the challenges faced by immigrant families as they navigate cultural assimilation, personal identity, and familial bonds. The novel captures the emotional complexity of living between two worlds, making it a powerful commentary on identity and heritage.

Anil Menon's *The Beast with Nine Billion Feet* is a thought-provoking science fiction novel that explores themes of technology, ethics, and family dynamics in a near-future India. The story follows two siblings, Tara and Aditya, who become entangled in a world of scientific experiments, bioethics, and corporate conspiracies after their father's controversial research draws attention. The novel addresses generational conflicts, the ethical implications of scientific progress, and the emotional struggles of growing up in a rapidly changing world. Menon's work offers a compelling blend of futuristic speculation and human drama, making it a significant contribution to Indian speculative fiction.

Salman Rushdie's *Fury* is a satirical and philosophical exploration of identity, rage, and the excesses of modern life. Set in early 2000s New York City, the novel follows Malik Solanka, a former historian and dollmaker who is consumed by inexplicable anger and existential dread. Fleeing his family in London, Solanka becomes embroiled in the chaotic, frenetic world of urban America. Rushdie critiques consumerism, media saturation, and the fractured nature of contemporary identity. The novel reflects the anxieties and frustrations of living in a globalized world, where personal and cultural disintegration fuel a pervasive sense of fury.

Akhil Sharma's *Family Life* is a semi-autobiographical novel that poignantly depicts the immigrant experience and the devastating impact of personal tragedy. The story follows the Mishra family, who move from India to the United States in search of a better life. Their world is shattered when the elder son, Birju, suffers a traumatic brain injury, leaving him in a permanent vegetative state. The novel examines themes of grief, guilt, and resilience as the family struggles to cope with the aftermath of the accident. Through understated yet powerful prose, Sharma captures the emotional toll of caregiving, the challenges of assimilation, and the fragility of family bonds.

These novels capture themes of alienation, identity, generational gaps, and the impact of modernity on human relationships. The term *"mobile human relationships"* refers to the evolving, adaptive, and sometimes fragmented nature of interpersonal connections in the contemporary world.

II. Review of Literature

1. Chattarji, Subarno. *Tracking the Indian Diaspora: Theoretical and Literary Perspectives*. Routledge, 2011.

Subarno Chattarji's *Tracking the Indian Diaspora* offers a comprehensive analysis of the Indian diaspora through both theoretical and literary lenses. The book examines how migration, globalization, and transnationalism have shaped the identities and experiences of Indian communities across the world. Chattarji delves into diasporic literature, exploring themes of displacement, nostalgia, identity, and cultural hybridity. By analyzing works by prominent authors and integrating sociological theories, the book provides valuable insights into how Indian diasporic writers reflect and negotiate their dual identities in a globalized world. This work is essential for understanding the complexities of diasporic existence and the interplay between home, memory, and identity.

2. Sundaram, Ravi. *Pirate Modernity: Delhi's Media Urbanism*. Routledge, 2009.

In *Pirate Modernity: Delhi's Media Urbanism*, Ravi Sundaram explores the intersection of urban life, media culture, and modernity in post-liberalization Delhi. The book investigates how new media technologies, informal economies, and the rapid transformation of urban spaces have created a dynamic yet chaotic cityscape. Sundaram introduces the concept of "pirate modernity" to describe the ways in which marginalized and informal networks bypass official regulations to create their own versions of modernity. Through case studies of media piracy, urban development, and grassroots innovations, the book provides a critical examination of the fluid, often contradictory nature of contemporary urban life in India's capital.

3. Deshpande, Shashi. "Writing from the Margin." *The Hindu*, 2008.

Shashi Deshpande's article *"Writing from the Margin"* published in *The Hindu* (2008) discusses the challenges and responsibilities of writing from marginalized perspectives in Indian literature. Deshpande reflects on her own experiences as a female writer, emphasizing the importance of giving voice to those who have traditionally been silenced or overlooked. She explores themes of gender, identity, and social expectations, arguing that literature has a crucial role in challenging societal norms and advocating for change. The article highlights the importance of representing diverse narratives and underscores how writing from the margins can enrich the literary landscape by bringing forth untold stories.

4. Ganguly, Debjani. *Caste, Colonialism, and Counter-Modernity*. Routledge, 2005.

Debjani Ganguly's *Caste, Colonialism, and Counter-Modernity* critically examines the historical and cultural intersections of caste and colonialism in India. The book explores how colonial discourses shaped the understanding of caste and how these interpretations continue to influence modern Indian society. Ganguly investigates the role of caste in literature, politics, and social movements, offering a nuanced analysis of how marginalized communities have resisted and redefined their identities. Through a combination of historical research and literary criticism, the book highlights the complexities of caste as both a traditional and a modern construct, contributing to ongoing debates about social justice and modernity in postcolonial India.

5. Lahiri, Jhumpa. *My Two Lives. Smithsonian Magazine*, 2006.

In her essay *"My Two Lives"* published in *Smithsonian Magazine* (2006), Jhumpa Lahiri reflects on her experiences growing up as an Indian-American and the challenges of navigating two distinct cultural identities. Lahiri explores themes of belonging, assimilation, and the sense of being caught between two worlds — her parents' Bengali heritage and her American upbringing. She candidly discusses the tension between embracing her cultural roots and adapting to American society, illustrating the complexities faced by second-generation immigrants. The essay provides a personal insight into the diasporic experience and highlights the broader struggles of identity and cultural duality in a globalized world.

III. Statement of the Proposed Problem

This study will investigate how do the selected novels reflect the changes and challenges in human relationships in the twenty-first century. It even tries to find in what ways do mobility (both physical and emotional) and socio-cultural shifts influence the characters' relationships and how do themes like identity, migration, infidelity, and generational conflict shape the portrayal of relationships in these novels.

IV. Scope and Limitations of the Study

This research focuses on Indian and Indian-diasporic literature. It tries to examine relationships in the context of globalization, migration, and modernity. It is limited to six novels published between 2003 and 2015. It excludes other forms of media or literature outside this timeframe and geographical context.

V. Relevance Of The Research Work

The selected authors used unique analytical and comparative theories in their work. As a result, the image of human interactions has changed dramatically. While traditional ideas about personal and familial relationships have lasted for centuries, these novels provide new viewpoints and insights into contemporary dynamics. As a result, it is critical to research, analyze, and comprehend the innovative and distinctive strategies used by these authors. In today's setting of modernization and post modernization, researchers must investigate the contemporary perspectives that these books take. As a result, it is critical to analyze the themes and narrative strategies used in these works. The research is highly relevant in today's society for several reasons, especially considering the impact of mobile technology on interpersonal communication, social interactions, and relationships. The study

in details offers valuable insights into the complexities of modern relationships and could help guide individuals, communities, and organizations in navigating the challenges and opportunities brought about by mobile communication.

VI. Significant of Proposed Problem:

Human relationships in the twenty first century went through various forms of changes. With the rejection of Meta-narrative and deconstruction of meaning, postmodernism influenced human life in every aspect: starting from the field of knowledge to the everyday basis of life. The rise of globalization led to cultural exchange and hybridization of various cultures. And these changes in discourse and knowledge formation largely affected human relationships. The commodification which was the direct impact of capitalism changed the human perspectives of looking at the world and also the way of looking at the fellow human being. Mechanization and dehumanization that came as the output of scientific development became threat to humanity. With the progress in science and technology religious belief and traditional values too got interrogated.

This research brings into the light the changed world and the human relationship that went through the various changes. The effect of capitalism in the human life and the various aspects of daily affairs are focused. The impact of globalization and its influences in the native culture are taken under consideration. Through the selected novels various changes brought in different spheres of life are examined. It concentrates on human relationship in twenty first century with particular critical insights into the emerging problems of human relationships, conflict of ideologies, degradation of moral values; domination and influences of Western technologies, hegemony and the manipulation of knowledge.

The age of globalization changed human being as well as human relationships. The new age brought complication and complexities in the society. With this complication in society human relationship too got complicated. The different aspect of marriage as shown in Professor Malik Solanka's married life and his extra marital affairs shows the changes that came in marital relationships. The bond of family shattered and the relationship between father and son also shattered.

Human relationships in the twenty first century underwent various changes with the rise of globalization and capitalism. The consumer culture which came along with the global market also made various changes in human relationships. In the age of rapid development various changes came in the relationships and bond that human shared with each other. The loss of

values and ethics in the new era of development made different impact in the relationships. With the rise of individualization, commitment was no longer to be found among people. The whole concept of family and marriage changed. People became less emotional and more rational. This abandonment of emotion made human bond weak.

Moreover, globalization changed world and human being in twenty first century. With the rise of capitalism and consumerism various developments took place. The science and technology flourished in the age of globalization. And with such changes in the world human relationships too changed. The bond shared by human being changed in the new century. The concept of society changed with the arrival of new world system. The rise of global market changed daily life of people also.

VII. Aims and Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the representation of changing human relationships in the selected novels.
2. To examine how globalization, mobility, and cultural shifts impact familial, romantic, and social bonds.
3. To explore themes of identity, alienation, and intimacy within the context of contemporary Indian and diasporic literature.
4. To identify the role of socio-economic factors and technology in shaping interpersonal dynamics.
5. To compare and contrast the depiction of relationships across the selected texts.

VIII. Hypothesis

The selected novels depict human relationships as fluid and adaptive, influenced by mobility, socio-cultural changes, and personal choices. The fragmentation and redefinition of relationships are a reflection of contemporary societal pressures and individual struggles for identity and connection.

IX. Research Methodology

This research would apply in-depth textual analysis of the selected novels. It will examine similarities and differences in the portrayal of relationships across the texts. It will try to identifying recurring themes such as identity, mobility, alienation, and intimacy. The research would try to place the novels within the framework of contemporary Indian society, globalization, and diasporic experiences. For the study, detailed analysis of character development, dialogue, and narrative structure.

X. Significance of the Study

The selected novels are significant works that reflect contemporary societal changes. Understanding how literature captures evolving relationships helps in comprehending broader socio-cultural dynamics. The significance of the present study lies in its ability to explore the intersection of technology, human relationships, and literature. By examining how mobile technologies are depicted in novels, this research can provide a deeper understanding of how contemporary writers perceive and critique the influence of mobile communication on human interactions. This study contributes to the field of contemporary literature, cultural studies, and relationship psychology by providing insights into twenty-first-century human interactions.

XI. Chapter Scheme

1. Introduction

This chapter introduces with the various changes in society and it also introduces the issues that are to be dealt in the rest of the chapters. The introduction focuses on various changes and the impact on human relationships that emerged in humanities during the century. It considers various kinds of developments effecting the society and individual in the twenty first century. The highly globalized world and its outcome like globalization, consumerism, sexuality, capitalism, migration and liberalism and their impacts on society and human relationships have been considered in this chapter. The issues which are dealt in the following chapters are briefly touched upon in the introductory part. The introduction also shows the various changes that came in the society because of the various development projects and its impact on human relationships.

Chapter 2. Postmodern Concept of Love, Marriage and Family:

This chapter concentrates on the changing notion of sexuality in India and attempts to read and examine the notion of love, sex and marriage; and the emerging culture of postmodern India. The society ingrained with traditional practices and the difficulty that came in changed human relation, dismantling cultural fabrics of the society, are the subject of discussion in the chapter. The changing concept of love, sex, marriage and sexuality prevalent in the society is also taken into consideration. This chapter studies two novels - Shashi Deshpande's *In the Country of Deceit*(2008) and *The Private Life of Mrs Sharma* (2015) by Ratika Kapur.

Chapter 3. Distancing Human Relationships:

This chapter attempts to illustrate causes and consequences related to migration and different problems liken hybridity, cultural conflict, identity crisis, prostitution and child abuse with the reference to the selected fiction for this chapter. The conflict of homeland culture and host country culture along with the problem of alienation and uprootedness created confusion among the migrant. This chapter focuses on two novels namely *The Namesake* (2003) by Jhumpa Lahiri and *Family Life* (2014) by Akhil Sharma.

Chapter 4. Human Relationship through Lenses of Psychology versus Technology & Dehumanization, Disease and Human Relationships:

This chapter attempts to delineate and discourse human relationship from the lenses of psychoanalytical formulations and attempts to evaluate and represent human life in postmodern society. This chapter also reads and analyzes the relationship of post human with technology and machine and gradually proceeds to discuss various diseases which are the results of human being's relationship with science and technology.

This chapter attempts to figure out the concept and practices of modernity and postmodernity looking into social and cultural nuances of postmodern India with particular attention on facts and reason responsible for changes in human outlook and its relationships. The aforesaid conception would be carried out keeping in view the theoretical assumptions and articulation of capitalist, globalized and consumerist discourses of literary world. This chapter deals with the impact of globalization, capitalism and consumerism on human society and the transformation of society because of these forces. In order to meet the aforesaid idea this chapter focuses on two novels namely *The Beast with Nine Billion Feet* (2009) by Anil Menon and *Fury* (2001) by Salman Rushdie.

Chapter 5. Conclusion:

The conclusion sums up findings of the thesis and upholds the undergoing conflict of the human relationships in the twenty first century. It holds the view that the rise of globalization and consumerism has largely devastated human bonds and has led to the various changes at individual and social level. It also shows that postmodern cultural condition and its associates like psychology, sexuality and technology have entirely subverted the preoccupied notion of life and relationships by disintegrating of self that created various enigmatic questions and dilemma for human life as well as humanity. The conclusion takes up the issues related

with declination and degradation of human emotion and sensibility causing disintegration and decentering in human relationships. The concluding part of the thesis is suggestive of current discourses from the twenty first century and its various dimensions which affects human relationships. It attempts to offer insights through literary lenses and indicates towards the possibility of new space in order to deal or revisit humane causes.

XII. Expected Outcomes

The research will be the useful for further researcher. The research will bring together psychological, diashporic sociological theories, hence, the topic will be useful for scholars too. This research will be useful to study all works of selective authors – Shashi Deshpande, Ratika Kapur, Jumpha Lahiri , Anil Menon, Salman Rushdie, Akhil Sharma together. Further, the researcher can study revised concept of human relations as portrayed in the present research. The present research is likely to provide insights into various dimensions of how mobile technology influences relationships in contemporary literature. By analyzing selected novels, the research will offer insights into the emotional, social, and psychological implications of mobile communication, while also exploring broader cultural trends, the evolution of literary forms, and the complexities of human connection in the digital era. This study will contribute to a deeper understanding of the intersections between technology, literature, and human interaction in the contemporary world. This research will foreground for further studies on complexity of family and personal relationships in light of cultural changes and globalization.

Bibliography

Primary Sources:

- Deshpande, Shashi. In the Country of Deceit. India: Penguin Books, 2008.
- Kapur, Ratika. The Private Life of Mrs. Sharma. New Delhi: Bloomsbury, 2015.
- Lahiri, Jhumpa. The Namesake. India: Harper Collins, 2003.
- Menon, Anil. The Beast with Nine Billion Feet. New Delhi: Zubaan, 2009.
- Rushdie, Salman. Fury. New Delhi: Penguin Random House, 2001.
- Sharma, Akhil. Family Life. India: Penguin Books Limited, 2014.

Secondary Sources:

- Appadurai, Arjun. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy." Theory, Culture and Society. India: Sage Publication, 1990.
- Baxi, Upendra. Human Rights in a Posthuman World. London: Oxford University Press, 2009. Beattite, Amanda Russel, and Anthony F. Lang Jr. War, Torture and Terrorism: Rethinking the Rules of International Security. New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Bewes, Timothy. "The Novel as an Absence: Lukács and the Event of Postmodern Fiction."
- NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction, vol. 38, no. 1, 2004, pp. 5-20. Web. 21 March 2017.
- Bongar, Bruce, Lisa M. Brown, Larry E. Beutler, James N. Breckenridge, and Philip G.
- Zimbardo, editors. Psychology of Terrorism. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Chattarji, Subarno. Tracking the Indian Diaspora: Theoretical and Literary Perspectives.Routledge, 2011.
- Deshpande, Shashi. "Writing from the Margin." The Hindu, 2008.
- Ganguly, Debjani. Caste, Colonialism, and Counter-Modernity. Routledge, 2005.
- Lahiri, Jhumpa. "My Two Lives." Smithsonian Magazine, 2006.
- Rao, M. Geek Nation: How Indian Science Is Taking Over the World. Mumbai Mirror, 2013.
- Singh, B. Dalit Women's Autobiographies: A Critical Appraisal. New Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2016.
- Sundaram, Ravi. Pirate Modernity: Delhi's Media Urbanism. Routledge, 2009.